(b) Government of India have released the following funds to the above States from the Calamity Relief Fund for relief measures in the wake of natural calamities including drought during 1996-97:—

(Rs. in crores)

States	Central share of Calamity Relief Fund released
Gujarat	104.70
Madhya Pradesh	38.31
Maharashtra	51.15
Orissa	36.76

In addition an ad-hoc assistance of Rs. 13.00 crores has also been released to Orissa from the National Fund for Calamity Relief.

Sugarcane production in Maharashtra

17. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have established tissue culture laboratories and heat treatment plants for substantially improving production and productivity of sugarcane in Maharashtra, particularly in Nagpur and other parts of Vidarbha region;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether Government propose to set-up such laboratories/plants in Nagpur and other parts of Vidarbha region on priority basis?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Sustainable Development of Sugarcane Based Cropping System, the Government of Maharashtra have assisted State Agricultural Universities and Non-Governmental Organisations for strengthening of tissue culture laboratories and heat treatment plants for improving production and productivity of sugarcane in the State. During 1995-96, assistance has been given to three State Agricultural Universities and one Non-Governmental Organisation. Besides, six heat treatment plants were commissioned.

Heat treatment plants is being provided under above scheme to sugar factories in Vidarbha region.

Area under paddy cultivation in Punjab

18. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total area of land in Punjab under paddy cultivation during the last three years;

(b) whether any financial assistance for undertaking research and development of paddy has been provided to the State during this period;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to increase production of paddy in Punjab?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) The area under paddy cultivation in Punjab during the last three years i.e. 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 was 21.79 lakh hectares, 22.77 lakh hectares and 21.61 lakh hectares respectively.

(b) to (d) The financial assistance provided to Punjab State for undertaking research and development of paddy under the All-India Coordinated Rice Improvement Project by Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) during the last three years i.e. 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 was Rs. 9.11 lakhs, Rs. 10.10 lakhs and Rs. 10.08 lakhs respectively. Further, to increase the production and productivity of paddy, the Government is implementing a centrally sponsored Integrated Cereals Development Programme in wheat based cropping system areas which include the development of rice crop as well in Punjab (earlier Integrated Programme of Rice Development (IPRD) in 1993-94), besides providing price and market support to the farmers. Under this programme, the financial assistance to the Punjab State during 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 was Rs. 192.80 lakhs, Rs. 39.76 lakhs and Rs. 355.00 lakhs respectively.

Monitoring of funds for rehabilitation of Latur victims

19. SHRI SANJAY DALMIYA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of donations received from

Indian and Foreign donors for rehabilitation of Latur victims;

(b) the total amount earmarked by the Central Government for rehabilitation of these victims and the total amount actually spent on this work so far; and

(c) the manner in which Government are monitoring the utilisation of the funds meant for earthquake victims?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Government of Maharashtra have received a donation of Rs. 255.48 crores from Indian and foreign donors for the rehabilitation of the victims of the Maharashtra earthquake of 1993. In addition, Overseas Development Administration (ODA), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Development Programme have also sanctioned grants totaling Rs. 79.00 crores.

(b) Government of Maharashtra is implementing a Maharashtra Emergency Earthquake Rehabilitation Programme at a cost of Rs. 1181.80 crores with a World Bank credit of Rs. 756.00 crores. Out of this, an amount of Rs. 788.50 crores has been spent by the end of January, 1997.

(c) Government of Maharashtra is constantly monitoring the utilisation of funds through a special Project Monitoring Unit (PMU).

Import of deadly fungus

20. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news report appearing in "The Indian Express", dated January 6, 1997, under the caption "Caution thrown to winds in importing deadly fungus";

(b) if so, whether the agricultural scientists have opined that the fungal spores in soil can be transmitted by wind or insects to standing crops unless experiments are restricted to a glass house; and

(c) if so, the precautions taken while making experiments to check the deadly effects of the fungus on crops?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The fungus in question, *Aspergillus parasiticus* occurs widely in nature in India. As the fungus is soil borne, the question of its dissemination through wind or insects does not arise.

(c) No experiments are being conducted with this fungus. The question of its containment in glasshouse, therefore, does not arise.

Centrally-Sponsored Schemes for farmers in Punjab

21. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of amount spent under the Centrally-sponsored schemes for farmers for increasing agricultural production in the country, particularly in the State of Punjab during the year 1996-97;

(b) the number of farmers benefited under the Schemes, District-wise;

(c) the target fixed for the purpose during this period by Government and achievements made thereunder; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) An amount of Rs. 555 crores has been released to the States during 1996-97 till December, 1996 for increasing agricultural production in the country. This includes Rs. 19 crores released to Punjab during 1996-97.

(b) to (d) A list of Schemes implemented in Punjab is enclosed (*See* below). It is difficult to quantify the targets/achievements regarding the number of farmers benefitted as a result of implementation of the scheme as benefits flow both directly and indirectly.